

## WHERE BOOKWORMS BORE

### A Glance at the World's Great Libraries.

#### AMERICA WILL BE IN IT

When the Astor-Lenox-Tilden Coalition Shall Have Been Effectuated.

#### THE NEW WORLD'S OLDEST LIBRARY

Is in Gotham—Cincinnati, Boston, Chicago and Philadelphia Are Not Lacking in Shrines for the Scholar—Of What Edinburg and Dublin Boast.

New York is soon to have one of the greatest libraries in the world. The coalition of the Astor, Lenox and Tilden libraries under one great roof and one management will form an institution with 1,500,000 of volumes and manuscripts, and will give the country at large a library of which it may well feel proud. At present this country has no library which can compare in extent with the British Museum of London or the Bibliotheque Nationale of Paris. Of course, in the number of libraries the United States compares favorably with any in the universe. But it is in the matters of completeness and the antiquity of works that is lacking.

With the immense sum that will be at the disposal of the new library this defect can be largely remedied, as its scope for work will be considerably

York, Massachusetts and New Hampshire. In those days New York was a thriving little place of 5200 inhabitants, 750 of whom were negro slaves.

The British governor took considerable interest in the small town, and when he had a new city hall built at the corner of Wall and Broad streets, upon the site where seventy years later George Washington took the oath as the first president of the United States, the little library was given a place in that structure.

In 1729 there died in Newington, England, a certain Rev. Dr. Milington, rector of that place, and he left quite a library "for the benefit of foreign lands." The trustees of his estate thought New York was just the place for the collection and in due time the books arrived and were installed in the little library.

In 1754 the library had grown to the dignity of having a board of trustees, who collected 1600 and gave it a fresh start. George III granted it a charter in 1772, but during the revolution it suffered, but was again boomed by the old Knickerbockers, whose descendants today keep up the family interest in the institution. The 6000 collected in 1774 was used to buy real estate, and as the town grew the library people sold out and moved northward. By repeated sales that \$2000 now represents real estate worth \$250,000.

Since the revolution the city library, as it is called, has had but six librarians. They were Isaac L. Kipp, from 1793 to 1824; John Forbes, from 1794 to 1824; Burris Strudmore, from 1824 to 1828; Philip J. Forbes, from 1828 to 1855; John McMullen, from 1855 to 1856, and Wentworth S. Butler, from 1856 to the present time.

The British museum ranks in importance before all the great libraries of the world, with the exception of the Bibliotheque Nationale at Paris, and far exceeds the latter institution in the systematic arrangements and accessibility of its contents. The library consists of over 1,550,000 printed volumes and 50,000 manuscripts.

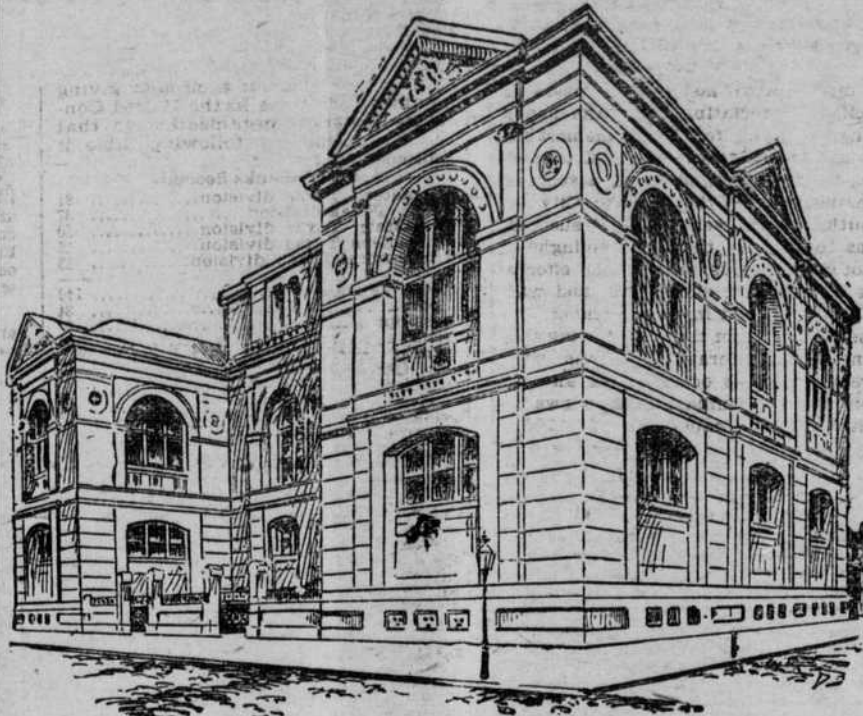
The foundation of the British museum dates from 1753, when £20,000 were paid the executors of Sir Hans Sloane in exchange for his books, manuscripts and curiosities, which were to be held by trustees for the benefit of the nation. A bill was passed through parliament for the purchase of the Sloane collection

and Henry I to Hyde Abbey, which are written gold letters. Besides a number of ancient Irish texts, the museum can boast an early copy of the Illiad, and one of the earliest known codices of the Odyssey. The number of genealogical rolls and documents relating to the local and family history of Great Scotland's Great Library.

Britain is very large. The principal library in Scotland is that of the Faculty of Advocates, and

When the Italian government published its valuable report in 1865, which showed that while the number of books in Austria (2,408,000) was greater than the total number in public libraries in Great Britain, Prussia, Bavaria or Russia, it was surpassed in France (4,389,000) and in Italy (4,149,281).

The Vatican library stands in the first rank as regards antiquity, since from the middle of the fifth century we have evidence of a pontifical library at Rome.



Lenox Library.

founded in 1680. In 1682 the active carrying out of the plan was committed to the dean of the Faculty, Sir George McKensie of Roseaugh, who may be considered to have founded the library. The number of volumes in the library, which is on the ground floor of the Parliament house, is computed to be 365,000. Of the special collections the most important are the Astoega collection of old Spanish books, purchased by the Faculty for 14000 in 1824; the Thorke collection, consisting of 1200 volumes, relating chiefly to the history and antiquities of the northern nations; the Dietrich collection of over 100,000 German pamphlets, including many of the writings of Luther and Melancthon, purchased for the small sum of £80, and the Comte collection.

The library of Trinity college, Dublin, originated in the year 1601, when the English army determined to commemorate their victory over the Spanish troops at Kinsale by some permanent monument. Accordingly they subscribed £1000 to establish a library in the University of Dublin. All of the books were at first deposited in Dublin Castle, and it was only after the restoration that the college obtained them. The library now contained 132,000 volumes and 1880 manuscripts. About 3000 are added every year.

**Gay Paris Well Supplied.**  
Paris is much better provided with great public libraries than London or any city in the world. Besides the Bibliotheque Nationale there are other great libraries, each having over 120,000 volumes.

Paris can claim the largest library in the world in the Bibliotheque Nationale. The real foundation of the institution, which was formerly known as the Bibliotheque du Roi, may be said to date from King John, the black king's captive, who had a considerable taste for books and who bequeathed his "royal library" of manuscripts to his successor, Charles V.

Charles V organized his library in the Louvre. He was very liberal in his patronage of literature, and many of the early monuments of the French language are due to his having employed scholars to make translations from ancient texts.

Under the management of Abbe Bignon the library was removed to its present home in the Rue Richelieu. A few years before the revolution the total number of printed books was 300,000. The revolution was serviceable to the library now called Bibliotheque Nationale by increasing it with forfeited collections belonging to exiles and to suppressed religious communities. Napoleon increased the government grant, and by the strict enforcement of the law concerning new publications realized in part his idea that the library should be universal in character.

**Some Big Figures.**  
The official estimate of the number of volumes in this great library reaches the extraordinary total of 2,290,000. The annual additions are 45,000. The collection of books on French history is in itself an enormous library of 440,000 volumes. The maps and charts are said to number 300,000. The manuscripts numbered in 1876 91,700 volumes, and the department of medals possessed in 1873 143,030 coins. The Royal library of Munich contains the largest collection of books in Germany. It was founded by Duke Albrecht V of Bavaria (1550-79), who made numerous purchases from Italy and incorporated the libraries of the Nuremberg physician, Schaefer, and of J. J. Fugger. The number of printed volumes is close to 1,000,000. It is especially rich in incunabula, many of them being derived from the libraries of the monasteries closed in 1803.

The building erected for this collection under King Louis I in 1832-43 is considered a model library structure. The archives are bestowed on the ground floor, while the two upper floors are devoted to the library, which occupies seventy-seven departments. Berlin is well supplied with libraries, seventy-two being registered in 1875. The largest is the Royal library, founded by the great elector, Frederick William, and opened by him in 1661.

The largest library in Austria and one of the most important collections in Europe is the Imperial Public library, founded by the Emperor Frederick III in 1440. Although its illustrious librarian, Lambeckus, attributes this honor to Frederick's son, Maximilian. The sum devoted annually to the purchase of books is 26,250 florins. The main library is said to be one of the most splendid halls in Europe.

**Rich in Ancient Works.**  
As the center of civilization Italy is of course the country where the oldest libraries are found and where the most valuable manuscripts are preserved. The Vatican library at Rome and the Laurentian library at Florence are sufficient in that respect. In spite of long centuries of persecution and suffering, Italy is still rich in books and manuscripts. There are probably more books in Italy than in any country except France.

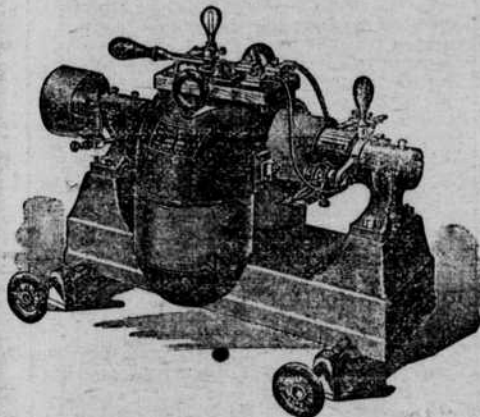
Nicholas V, who reigned in 1455, may be considered the true founder.

Few libraries are so magnificently housed as is the Biblioteca Vaticana. The famous Codex Vaticanus are placed in the great double hall, which is decorated with frescoes, depicting ancient libraries and councils of the church. At the end of the great hall is an immense hall, richly decorated and opening out from the right to left. The present official estimate is about 250,000 volumes, including 2500 fifteenth century editions.

Among the 25,600 manuscripts are some of the most valuable in the world for antiquity and intrinsic importance. The Biblioteca Palatina in Florence, is the largest library in Italy. There are many valuable autograph originals of famous works in this collection, including Dante and the later poets, as well as the historians, from Villani to Michiavelli. The Imperial library of St. Petersburg is the third largest in the world, and now claims to possess 1,000,000 printed volumes.



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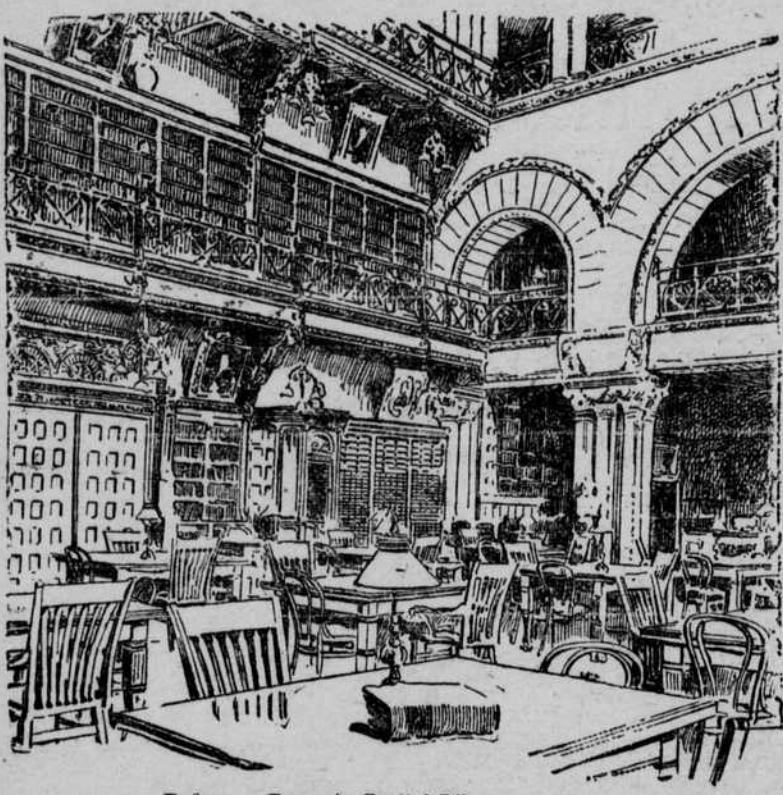
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widened. Of course it will be impossible to secure the priceless manuscripts which so enrich these institutions of countries of much greater antiquity than ours, but in the matter of contemporary literature it will be in a position to keep in the first rank.

The site for the new library is now under consideration, but it is quite certain that it will be located far up town, a misfortune to the business community of the lower end of the city. Two sites are now engaging the attention of the managers. One is on the heights of Morningside park, in the vicinity of the \$10,000,000 cathedral now building and of the new Columbia college. The other is the plot of ground immediately to the rear of the present Lenox library, which occupies the Fifth avenue block between Seventy-first and Seventy-second streets. There is some talk of buying all the rest of the land running east to Madison avenue and erecting a huge building on the square. This would make a noble structure, and would give ample room for the immense array of books and their proper classification.

Cincinnati and Boston both have great libraries, and the other large cities of the country like Chicago and Philadelphia are well equipped.

The great advantage that the European libraries have over the ones in this country is that they are governmental institutions, and the local authorities of St. Petersburg, Paris and London have

and of the Harleian manuscripts, costing \$10,000. To these, with the Cottonian manuscripts acquired by the country in 1700, was added by George II, in 1757, the royal library of the former kings of England, coupled with the privilege which the Royal library had for many years enjoyed of obtaining a copy of every publication entered at Stationers' hall.

This addition was of great importance, as it enriched the museum with the old collections of Archbishop Cranmer, Henry Prince of Wales and other patrons of literature, while the transfer of the privilege with regard to the acquisition of new books, a right which has been secured by successive copyright acts, secured a large and continuous augmentation, the yearly average of which is something like 10,000 volumes.

In 1763 George III presented the well-known Thomason collection, consisting of 2200 volumes and pamphlets, issued in England between 1640 and 1660, and in 1820 Sir Joseph Banks bequeathed to the nation his important library of 16,000 volumes.

Many other libraries have since been incorporated in the museum, the most valuable being George III's royal collection, embracing 15,000 volumes of tracts and 65,259 volumes of printed books, which cost the king about \$130,000.

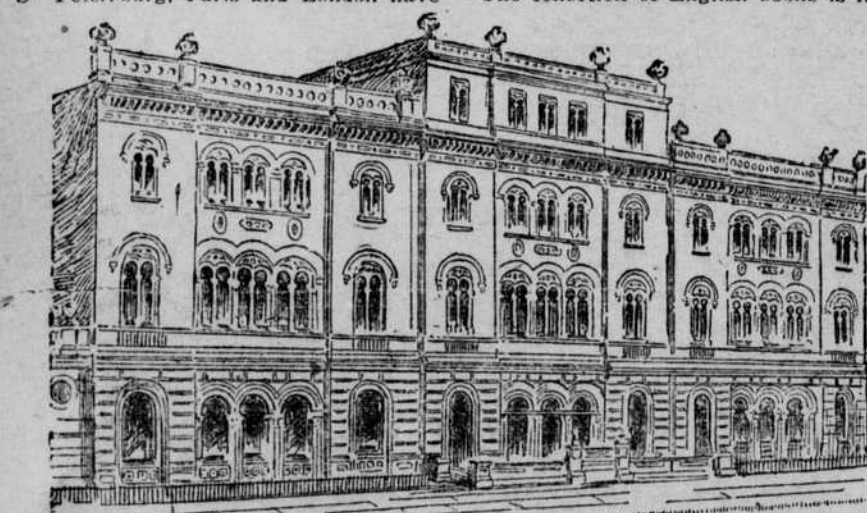
The collection of English books is far

from approaching completeness, but apart from the enormous quantity of volumes the museum contains an extraordinary number of rarities. Few libraries in the United States equal in number or value the American books in the museum.

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Astor Library.

the power to compel all publishers to donate copies of everything they publish. This of itself is a great aid and the Bibliotheque Nationale of Paris gains at least 20,000 volumes a year by these methods.

**The Oldest American Library.**  
In New York city is the oldest library in the new world. It is hidden away in University Place and few of the generality of New Yorkers know of its existence. The library was started in 1780 by Richard Earl of Bellamont, who had been appointed in 1698 governor of New